DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 433 057 JC 990 549

TITLE	New Paradigm: Articulation/Transfer. Arizona State University and the Maricopa Community Colleges.
INSTITUTION	Maricopa County Community Coll. District, Phoenix, AZ.; Arizona State Univ., Tempe.
PUB DATE	1996-03-00
NOTE	9p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Web site: http://www.dist.maricopa.edu/eddev/artic/parintro.html (full text).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Articulation (Education); College Role; *College Transfer Students; Community Colleges; *Curriculum Development; Educational Change; Educational Planning; Educational Policy; Higher Education; *Intercollegiate Cooperation; Partnerships in Education; State Universities; *Transfer Policy
IDENTIFIERS	*Arizona State University; *Maricopa County Community College District AZ

ABSTRACT

This white paper defines a new process for articulation between Arizona State University (ASU) and the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD). Although the transfer rate of community college students to ASU is good, with a little over 32 percent of ASU upper division students having completed 48 or more credit hours at a community college, problems still exist. There is a recognition that the changes (or lack of changes), additions, and deletions made in the curriculum or degree requirements at the community colleges and at the university impact both institutions and, perhaps more importantly, the students served by both institutions. Therefore, the two institutions decided to assess the policy, procedures, and practices at both institutions that govern or influence articulation. This paper presents the mission overlap of ASU and MCCCD, and sets forth a policy that begins with the premise that the institutions will collaborate and cooperate and not compete with each other in ways that will negatively impact students. It examines the need to define procedures and practices in terms of communication and decision-making that is characterized by the following: faculty driven with administrative support, faculty-to-faculty participation, sufficient time for discussion, precise definitions, checks and balances, appeals, and accountability. The paper also asserts the need to define terms, and looks at addressing other areas of concern, research/data analysis, and dissemination and training. (VWC)

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New Paradigm: Articulation/Transfer

Arizona State University
and
The Maricopa County Community College District

Introduction

In March 1996, MCCCD and ASU released a white paper which spells out a new process for articulation between the two institutions. The document was signed by Paul A. Elsner, MCCCD Chancellor, and by Lattie F. Coor, ASU President.

Entitled: **New Paradigm: Articulation/Transfer - Arizona State University and The Maricopa Community Colleges**, the process to implement the policy will be managed by Alfredo G. de los Santos Jr., MCCCD Vice Chancellor for Student and Educational Development, and by Milton D. Glick, ASU Senior Vice President and Provost.

http://www.dist.maricopa.edu/eddev/artic/parintro.html

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New Paradigm: Articulation/Transfer

Arizona State University

and

The Maricopa County Community College District

The relationship between Arizona State University (ASU) and the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD) is such now that we need to assess the policy, procedures and practice at both institutions that govern or influence articulation.

Articulation works relatively well as evidenced by the fact that in the Fall 1994 semester, 7,091 of 21,981 (32.25%) ASU upper division students had completed 48 credit hours or more at one of the Maricopa community colleges. More than 66.15% (14,541 of 21,981) of upper division students at ASU had earned some credits at one or more of the MCCCD colleges. In that same semester, 3,952 students were concurrently enrolled at ASU and at least one of the MCCCD colleges. Each year approximately 8,000 students transfer back to a Maricopa community college, reporting that ASU was the last college attended.

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However, all is not perfect. For example, students who transfer to ASU tend to accumulate more hours (on average eight additional hours) in pursuit of a degree than do students who begin and complete a degree at ASU. The reasons for these and other differences in achievement between the two groups of students should be clearly understood and addressed.

It is clear that changes (or lack of changes), additions, and deletions made in the curriculum or degree requirements at the community colleges and at the university impact both institutions and, perhaps more importantly, the students served by both institutions.

At the same time, given accreditation requirements, the needs of the workplace, the rapid changes in technology, the demographic changes, and the expectations of the employers, to name a few factors, a dynamic curriculum is a necessity.

The Current Process Is In Need Of Improvement

In the last few months, it has become clear that the current process of communications between and among the administrators and the faculty at both institutions in relation to articulation needs improvement.

We need to revisit policy and, more importantly, our procedures and practices as they relate to curriculum and students. However, we need to begin this process with a new paradigm, a different philosophical base which has as its core what is in the best interest of students.

ASU/MCCCD - Mission Overlap

We need to think of the substantial mission and responsibility overlap between ASU and MCCCD and for the purposes of this paper, we define ourselves as follows:

two large, complex institutions separately governed and with different missions -- who are partners, inter-dependent, inter-connected, in serving a large group of students that represent a subset of the entire student bodies of the respective institutions.

The old paradigm of one institution being the sender and the other the receiver does not fit. What happens at one institution impacts the students served by both.

In dealing with this subset of students we might think of ourselves not as we and they, but as us. We must keep in mind that ASU and MCCCD have a special, fragile relationship of great value; yet we must also serve the state's other community colleges and universities.

Policy

We need to define a policy that begins with this premise and states clearly that we will collaborate/cooperate and not compete with each other in ways that will negatively impact students. We need a policy that speaks about mutual respect and trust. We need a policy that focuses first of all on the needs and interests of the students and secondarily on other needs and interests.

We need what one might call "win" and "win/win" policy. "Win" for the students we both serve and "win/win" for the two institutions.

Procedure/Practice

We need to define procedures/practices in terms of communication and decision-making that is characterized by the following:

1. **Faculty driven with administrtive support:** Initiated by the faculty and supported by the administration of both institutions recognizing that it may be impossible to develop consensus among the over 2000 faculty that hail from 13 reasonably independent institutions.

2. **Faculty-to-faculty:** Parallel curriculum development in lower division, undergraduate offerings and articulation from initiation to completion involves the participation of appropriate faculty from both institutions. However, respective accreditation bodies expect that community college faculty are responsible for curriculum for associate degrees and university faculty must be responsible for the curriculum for baccalaureate and graduate degrees.

   Neither the universities nor the community colleges want simply to be informed about decisions/changes already made. All parties should want to be involved at the initial discussion stages of proposed changes in lower division curriculum, to discuss options, to consider impacts on students at both institutions, to participate in the decision-making.

3. **Timely:** Allows sufficient time for discussions about options, impact on students, and so forth while recognizing the need to observe catalog deadlines of the respective institutions and the need to proceed with as much efficiency as possible.

4. **Precise:** Is clear who is responsible to do what, when, and how.

5. **Checks and balances:** Allows participants to insure that decisions are not made unilaterally and/or arbitrarily.

6. **Appeals:** Provides for a process to be used in case of impasse, etc. Ideally, all curriculum issues involving lower division courses should be solved between and among the faculty. When an impasse is reached, then pre-identified administrators from both institutions will meet to discuss and to solve problems.

7. **Internal practice:** Is part of the institutional process of curriculum development.

8. **Accountability:** Both institutions need to identify appropriate administrators who will be accountable for managing the process and who will be responsible.

Define Terms

We also need to begin to define a number of terms, the most important ones being "upper division" and "lower division." As work proceeds on the articulation document, perhaps other terms will emerge. Perhaps we should begin with the term "articulation."

Addressing Other Areas Of Concern

We need a mechanism to address issues of great concern to faculty, administrators and governing boards of both institutions. For example, the community college faculty are concerned about upper division creep and lack of equivalent lower division major requirements at different campuses of ASU. Community college and university faculty are concerned about community college credit given for high school courses when the instruction is directed to other than the

most "able and ambitious." The university faculty is concerned because it must be accountable to the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) for many outcomes concerning transfer students over which they have little control (such as graduation rates and time to degree). The list goes on and on.

Research/data Analysis

Instead of each institution analyzing data and doing research separately in relation to articulation/transfer issues, we need to collaborate on joint efforts, to work together to specify the questions which need to be answered and work together to answer them or establish an independent, objective research service to address the issues.

Right now we tend to negate each other's issues/concerns by questioning the data or the source of the data. When someone points a finger at a problem, we question the finger instead of dealing with the problem.

While the mission of each institution is different, both serve a subset of identical students...andthe same business/corporate/government communities as they relate to this subset of students. Sometimes we use as part of the rationale for making some decisions the needs of the communities; yet it is apparent, perhaps obvious, that the interpretation or "read" of the needs are different at each institution.

We need to deal frontally with issues and make decisions based on data that we jointly collect and analyze.

Dissemination/Orientation/Training

Once the policies, procedures, and practices, including the internal processes of both institutions are redefined, whatever document(s) is (are) developed need to be disseminated widely across both institutions.

An initial orientation should be provided to large groups of people, including the administrative/executive staff, department chairs, faculty and staff.

Training sessions need to be provided from then on, on a regular basis, continuously, frequently.